

**State of Maryland Commission on Civil Rights  
Commission Meeting  
May 14, 2024 – 10am  
Meeting held virtually via Google Meet  
MINUTES**

**Commissioners Present:** Stephanie Suerth, MPA, CCEP, Chair; Janssen E. Evelyn, Esq, Vice Chair; Angela Scott, Esq; Eileen Levett, Gina McKnight-Smith

**Management Present:** Cleveland L. Horton II, Acting Executive Director; Nicolette Young, Assistant Director; Glendora Hughes, General Counsel

**Staff Present:** Gerald T. Ford, Executive Associate;

**Members of the Public:** None

**Meeting called to order at 10:07 a.m.**

**Chairperson’s Report**

The Chair reminded the Commissioners about the Gala on August 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Acting Executive Director’s Report**

The Acting Executive Director reviewed the Case Processing report. The investigative supervisors and the Acting Executive Director are currently developing a strategy to reduce some of the aged cases in our backlog.

MCCR began its listening sessions in Washington, Garrett and Allegheny counties. The major issues captured during these initial listening sessions were housing affordability and lack of access to adequate transportation. The goal of the listening sessions is to listen to the community and learn firsthand what are the issues impacting them. Once MCCR completes its listening sessions, it will coordinate with the Office of the Governor and issue a final report.

MCCR also held its Fair Housing Forum at the Greenbelt Library in Prince Georges County. The main issues discussed were, source of income, housing appraisal bias, and the enforcement of housing discrimination. MCCR is currently in the process of creating a fair housing form specifically for realtors. The anticipated timeline for that forum will be sometime in September or October 2024.

**Assistant Director’s Report**

Currently, MCCR has expended 96.2% of its General Fund budget.

MCCR will be working with the Department of Budget and Management to make adjustments based on eligible discretionary operating expenses as well as personnel costs that can be transitioned over to federal funds.

MCCR currently has two vacancies:

- Civil Rights Officer I – Internal recruitment conducted and anticipate moving a contractual staff member into the permanent position.
- Assistant General Counsel I – Recruitment ended on May 8, 2024. Anticipate filling the position by July 2024.

MCCR received additional funding support in FY 2024 for three contractual positions to include \$210,327 in general funds and an additional spending authority increase totaling \$58,894 in federal funds. MCCR received a \$84,365 deficiency as part of FY 2024 and will receive additional funds for cost-of-living adjustments prior to year-end close-out.

As of April 30, 2024, MCCR collected \$9,425 in revenue for the gala and was awarded a \$5,000 sponsorship from the Department of Housing and Community Development's Office of Community Engagement. MCCR has submitted budget amendments to DBM to receive spending authority to utilize the funds in FY 2024.

The 60th Anniversary of the Civil Rights Act Luncheon will be held on July 2, 2024 at the DoubleTree by Hilton Baltimore BWI Airport. The registration portal should go live the week of May 13, 2024, and tickets are \$60.

FY 2024 ends on June 30, 2024. The Assistant Director is working with DBM to ensure the agency closes in the black. Currently reviewing third quarter projections with DBM. Based on preliminary review, it will require eligible general fund expenditures (i.e. personnel costs and discretionary operating) to be shifted to federal funds.

## **General Counsel's Report**

The General Counsel highlighted a few points from the Unit's written report.

General Counsel activities in April include:

- Serving as a Keynote Speaker at the MSBA Leadership Academy's "Affirmative Action Symposium on April 13, 2024, at Bowie State University;
- Served as a panelist for the MSBA Employment Law Institute on April 16, 2024;
- Participated with the Acting Executive Director and the E & O Unit at the MCCR Western Maryland Listening Sessions April 22, 23, and 24, 2024; and,
- Attended MSBA Labor & Employment Law Section meeting on April 30, 2024, and presented the MSBA's DEIA Plan and implementation process for the plan.

## **New Business**

The Commission approved two new members to join the Western Maryland Advisory Council. Devin Barroga and Hailie Toro. Hailie will serve as the first student representative on the Council.

**The meeting went into executive session at 10:43 a.m.**